

HOMELESS FAMILY EVICTED

After trying unsuccessfully for 4 years to get a home for herself and her children through the local authorities Mrs. Keating made a home for herself and her children by moving in to squat in an empty house in Amhurst Rd. She was immediately evicted by the police. With the help of other local squatters she moved back into the house. The police then returned and violently evicted Mrs. Keating and her children again and arrested many of the local women squatters who were in the house at the time helping her to prepare her new home. Those arrested were remanded to appear at Old St. court on 6 June. Three of the defendants have taken out summonses for assault and criminal damage against the police which will also be heard on 6 June.

This is Mrs. Keating's account of the eviction on 23 May:

HER STORY

"I was put on the streets again the day before yesterday at around 8am in a dressing gown and slippers and was refused permission to even put my clothes on. The builders put myself and 3 children out and also a pregnant woman; the police gave them full permission to throw us out in the rain, and all we owned was thrown out into the street, my children's clothes were damaged and the little bit of furniture we had was smashed. The only possessions we had were soaked with rain. I appealed for help and we were helped by some other squatters who were nearly all women. They helped me to re-enter the house. We were back inside for about 30 minutes and the next thing we were charged by police who had completely lost control of themselves. They barged down the door with planks of wood and crowbars. They also broke into the back of the house and gave the women, all of us, no chance to surrender. They just grabbed and kicked and punched whoever they came across, and as a result many of us have bad bruises. My children would have been badly hurt only for one of these girls who tried to protect them. The police had lost control of themselves and these innocent people got charged with offences that never occurred. I saw a girl kicked and punched by 2 police officers. I was dragged out by my neck and held by my throat with my arms behind my back and punched. My children saw the way I was dragged out by the police although I begged them to let me walk so my children weren't made to see them treating me like an animal as they stood there in the street screaming and begging the police to let me go. But they just kept on dragging me in this hold around my throat because of which I have lost my voice. My throat is sore now.



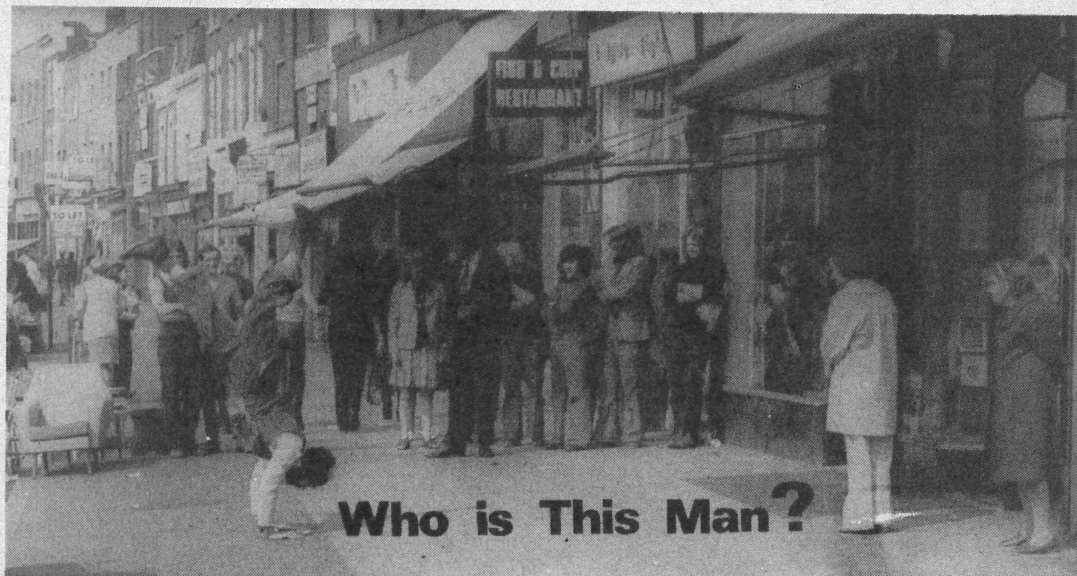
Mrs Keating and her children after the first eviction.

I appeal to the public- is this the treatment homeless, defenceless women with children and young babies should get? I want you to read this and try to do something to help us as we have no protection from the police, whose only 'cover-up' for themselves is to put ridiculous charges on people who got beaten up."

"SQUATTING IS A CIVIL MATTER BETWEEN LANDLORD AND OCCUPIER. IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR THE POLICE TO INTERVENE WITHOUT A COURT ORDER."-Robert Mark, Commissioner of Police.

The house from which Mrs. Keating was evicted, 290 Amhurst Rd. is owned by Second Actel Housing Association - a so-called charitable association to house the homeless. It was in the last stages of conversion. Since January 1972 many of their houses have been occupied - simply because they seem to own nearly all the empty houses around here. After October 1972 squatters began to live in their nearly converted houses, which were often left empty for months after conversion even though the list of homeless in Hackney was doubling each month. Research into Second Actel has shown that although the association itself shows no profit on paper, the board of directors is made up of the directors of all the conversion companies that it gives business to. Every shareholder has interests through partnership or investment in, for example, a building or surveying firm - which is the reason why so many of their houses are empty for so long before conversion as all the work is channelled to these few firms. Far from being a 'charitable organisation' Second Actel is a profiteering racket.

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Background of a squatter

"My name is Mrs. Anita Keating. I am a mother of 4 children all under the age of 7. I have a husband who has been in and out of prison, which has caused me to be homeless in the beginning. I lived in a hostel with my 4 children as I had nowhere to go. This was nearly 4 years ago. I was in the hostel, which was filthy and ready for demolition, when the council decided to put myself and my children in a 'Half-Way' house. It was very small and worse than the hostel, except that I didn't have to share the rooms with anyone else. I had 2 small bedrooms and 1 small living room, a toilet and kitchen - a little square that you could hardly move in. No bathroom and no hot water. I was expecting my fourth child. When I was 6 months pregnant the council (Islington Borough) moved me to another 'Half-Way' house with a promise that I'd be moved to permanent accommodation within 9 to 12 months. I had my fourth child and I still had only 2 bedrooms. One was a boxroom in which just one bed would fit and the other room was for the 4 children. There was a bathroom this time but I was on the first floor and there was no fire escape though the stairs were all wood and on many occasions there were small fires on the stairway. My children were really deprived of playing in the garden or anywhere safe to play. Then my husband came out of prison and caused a lot of trouble by harassing me, breaking windows and kicking in my doors. I went to the council in Upper St. nearly every day and I was told I had been nominated for the GLC list and had to wait for them to give me a place. But they never bothered and I got more aggravation from my husband and I had to move out to live with relations in Ireland. I stayed there for 3 months and came back to find that I still had no home or help from the Islington council. I went to the welfare for help but was only offered bed and breakfast accommodation in Finsbury Park where prostitutes and drunks go; as it is known for that in the area is this what children should have to go through? A friend took us in for a few weeks but only had 2 bedrooms herself and our 6 children all had to sleep in one bed and me on a chair. I have tried and begged for a home for my children and I can't even get them into a school."

Housing Enquiry

In January 1973 a large meeting at Shoreditch Town Hall decided to back a motion advocating the setting up of a public enquiry to investigate how the housing crisis in Hackney can be solved. The meeting chose 7 people to act as the initial committee that would expand to 20 when the enquiry actually took place. The first task for the members of the committee was to contact Councillor Wilson, chairman of the Housing Management Committee, and gain his approval for the enquiry; the group would need to interview officials of the Housing Management and Housing Development Committees and also members of staff of the Housing Department. On February 12th the committee met with Councillor Wilson and the deputy chairman of the Housing Management Committee, the Housing Manager, and the Housing Manager Designate.

At that meeting Coun. Wilson agreed to discuss the enquiry with other members of his committee and to give an answer within 3 weeks. Since that time he has been contacted on numerous occasions and still has not produced an answer.

The 7 elected members of the committee are going to discuss what pressure can be put on the Housing Management Comm. and what ideas they have for getting the enquiry going. Also organisations, groups and people within the Borough can put pressure on the Housing Comm. and its Chairman to make a decision in favour of the enquiry as soon as possible.

The committee can be contacted c/o Anthony Kendall, Centerprise.

Hackney People's Press

This paper has open working-meetings every Thursday from 7pm at Centerprise 34 Dalston Lane E8. Anybody can come along and any help what so ever is always needed either in writing articles, helping to produce the paper or selling it. If you think you can help in any of these things come along on Thursday night.

NEXT ISSUE:
WE NAME THE
MAN BEHIND
THE SCANDALS



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Hackney Playbus

The aims of the Hackney Playbus are both to demonstrate and to fulfil a need in many Hackney estates for good playgroup facilities for the under-fives. Some estates have no playgroups at all and the only formal provision to serve hundreds of children will be a few swings and a broken seesaw. De Beauvoir estate for example has an estimated 1500 children, and though we have as yet no figure for the under-fives it must be a large number.

It is a relatively recent idea that playgroups can be of benefit to both children and their mothers. Perhaps it has been too easy to ignore this real need, to the extent that the lack of established groups may be interpreted as a lack of need for them. We want both the tenants and the council to recognise this need and to do something about it.

We plan to work on two estates to start off with, Kingsmead in the mornings and De Beauvoir in the afternoons, so that a group of 15 children from each estate can come to five sessions per week until a more permanent group can be established in more stable and spacious premises on the estate. So we are doing two things. Firstly we are providing play facilities for some children almost as an emergency service, so that those children who start school in September 1973 will not completely miss out on the playgroup experience. Secondly we are providing a focal point for mothers to meet, to see how much their children enjoy the group, to work in it, and to join together to fight for the sort of facilities which should be provided.

The bus is run by an independent committee with a grant from Hackney Council, and we are still in the early stages. A second-hand double-decker bus was bought from London Transport last year and was on Kingsmead estate last summer. Since then staff and boys at Hackney Downs school have re-equipped and painted the bus. We have built-in tanks for sand and water. There is a 'house' built round the back seat upstairs, well furnished with domestic bits and pieces. We have a plentiful supply of paint, clay, construction toys etc, and as many nice things to experiment with as we can fit into the limited space. We went into action on May 14th at Kingsmead and have had no difficulty in finding children and mothers keen to help. Ultimately we will take 15 children aboard but we have started with about 8 children, so that there is plenty of room for mothers to stay until their children are happy to be left, and to give the two permanent staff and two voluntary helpers (mothers) a chance to get to know the children as individuals from the start. Our greatest difficulties, in fact, have been external to the playgroup itself. Problems of finding a driver to move the bus to the estate and take it away again after the session, finding a cheap safe place to park overnight, tend to seem insurmountable. If anyone reading this article can possibly help with the driving (HGV licence) even for a few days, we would be very glad to hear from you. (£1 per session - phone Centerprise 254-1620.)

Fran Crowther



UNHEALTHY HEALTH REPORT

For some reason, there is no statutory obligation on local authority departments to produce annual reports of their services. No wonder, then, that so few departments ever make public details about themselves. So first of all we ought perhaps to thank the Hackney Health Department for at least producing an annual report even though the contents reveal serious problems of large proportions. We are a bit worried about the distribution of the report, though, because having gone to the length of printing it, the council might have made it more available generally. It is supposed to be a public document, yet six months after issue, the Stoke Newington Reference Library has not yet got a copy, and it seems the only way a member of the public can get a copy is by writing in to the MOH; callers at the Health Department offices in Shoreditch are told that copies can only be made available on written application.

STAFF SHORTAGE

What is immediately made evident in the 1971 report - the latest - is how understaffed many of the services are, yet the report gives no reasons for this situation and one wouldn't guess the gravity of the situation from the glossy public relations pre-occupation of the council. The slogan 'Hackney Cares' rings a bit hollow in view of some of the following figures:

Nursing Centre Superintendants	6 + 3 vacancies
Health Visitors	29 + 12 vacancies
School Nurses	12 + 5 vacancies
District Nursing and Midwifery Staff	30 + 18 vacancies
Nursery Assistants	2 + 2 vacancies
District Public Health Inspectors	15 + 11 vacancies
Chiropodists	3 + 4 vacancies

Perhaps the slogan should be - 'Hackney Cares - when it can get round to it'.

RISING INFANT MORTALITIES

For at least the third successive year, the infant mortality rate has risen in Hackney and now stands at 24 deaths per 1,000. This is in fact 33% higher than the average for England and Wales which itself is pretty high compared with many other European countries. Apart from birth injuries, the largest single cause of infant deaths is pneumonia and other respiratory causes which we would assume are strongly linked to the very poor housing and environmental conditions in the borough.

ANTE-NATAL CARE

The number of ante-natal sessions at all of the clinics has dropped dramatically compared with previous years. For example, at Barton House in Stoke Newington, there were 51 sessions in 1970 compared with 8 sessions in 1971. Now although this is part of a policy decision to hand over this work to the general practitioners, there is no mention in the report as to how a check is to be made to ensure that the new scheme is working.

'AVAILABLE RESOURCES'

Potentially the most important person in the local health service is the Health Visitor whose job is to be out in the community, visiting every new-born baby, discharged hospital patients, elderly people and many other categories of personal ill-health. The Health Visitor's job also includes the 'early detection of ill-health and surveillance of high-risk groups and the recognition and identification of need and mobilisation of appropriate resources where necessary.' Quite a comprehensive and admirable brief. Yet in Hackney this service is nearly one third understaffed, and - this is not mentioned in the report - the Health Visitors are each working with a case load of at least 400 families! Much more worrying though is the following statement which appears in the section on Health Visiting: 'The service the health visitor offers is essential IF MEDICO/SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE TO BE CONTAINED WITHIN MANAGEABLE PROPORTIONS IN RELATION TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES IN MONEY AND PERSONNEL QUITE APART FROM THE PROMOTION OF THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY IN ITS WIDEST SENSE.' (our emphasis).

Since when has the concept of 'manageable proportions' been the explicit criterion for a health programme? And the idea of 'available resources' is a Tory idea which should always be challenged by Socialists, not accepted passively.



FACTORY CONDITIONS

The Hackney Health Department is also responsible for the implementation of the 1961 Factories Act which legislates for the conditions in local factories. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of local factory conditions will find the statistics here rather incredible.

Are we really to believe that out of the 418 factories visited (out of a total of 2,546), NONE of them suffered from 'want of cleanliness', NONE of them were 'overcrowded', NONE of them were inadequately ventilated, NONE of them had an 'unreasonable temperature', NONE of them had 'insufficient sanitary conveniences'? Are we really to believe that there are only 683 'outworkers' in Hackney - that is people who work at home on jobs supplied by businesses earning extravagant wages by running up trousers at 7p a pair for instance? This section of the report seems to come from another world.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

A lot of the work of the Health Department has now been transferred to the Social Services Department and since they don't produce a report, we know less now than we have in past years. It's not unreasonable to demand that in future all of the departments run the Borough should produce public reports on their activities - they could be duplicated and the cost need not be prohibitive.

HEALTH CRISIS

The health issue in Hackney is pretty grim. Only recently both the national and the local press were reporting that Hackney Hospital had been forced to close both its operating theatres on the grounds of hygienic unsuitability. All of the hospitals which serve Hackney people are poor in some way or other. Which is why the local authority service should be forcing the pace and the councillors - who sit on local hospital boards and who are responsible for the Hackney Health Department getting out and finding out what is wrong.

In no way are we blaming the people who work in the local health services. Most of them work enormously hard, often in poor conditions and with low pay. We are less happy, though, about the administration of these services and their lack of sensitivity to people's requirements. Much of our criticism must focus on the councillors who sit on the Health Committee, for in many ways they are dishonest about the problems they face and never make public the inadequacy of the local services, preferring to paper over the very large cracks with a smooth public relations job. The fact that the Health Report can be accepted by the full council without discussion does not say much for their supposed job of being there as our representatives to look after and safeguard our interests. The health services in Hackney are at crisis point and we want to know why.

ken worpole

SWEAT-SHOP REVIVAL

Hackney People's Press asked the London Regional Organiser of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, Mr Mindel, to comment on the Hackney Borough Council's Health Report. He said that the estimate of 683 outworkers in Hackney was a gross underestimate of the position. His union felt that there were at least 20,000 outworkers in London and that the numbers were increasing all the time. He felt that though he understood many of the reasons that forced people to take in out work, like their inability to leave home and the need to supplement the husband's wage earnings. These workers were in an extremely vulnerable position and unless they join a union and engage in some sort of collective action they would be always be weak and would also threaten their fellow workers within factories. Mr. Mindel stated that the position of garment workers within the factory situation at present was seriously undermined by the ability of the employers to take work to people in their houses. If he, on behalf of his union members demanded longer holidays or extra pay employers at present were in a position to move work out into people's houses and pay them far lower rates of pay. Mr. Mindel would welcome outworkers contacting him at the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers and would willingly discuss with any outworker their position within the Union. They can be contacted at 16 Charles Square, London N1 or ring 253-7901 or 253-1137 and also at 60-66 Wardour St. W1.

'1972—A YEAR OF INCREASED REPRESSION

In view of the objective and fairly liberal approach of the National Council for Civil Liberties, to human rights in this country, their recently published annual report, must be viewed with the utmost seriousness.

In their summary of the year they state:-

"That there has been major limitations on the freedom of individuals."

"There has been a transparent allegiance between the government and the judiciary."

"The myth of an unarmed police force has been shattered."

"Conspiracy law has become a new and useful weapon in the hands of those that seek to limit the right to protest."

"The Criminal Law Revision Committee recommended changes which would have undermined ... the rights of the suspect and the defendant. The slender protection afforded by the Judges Rules—so often anyway ignored by the police—would have been further weakened, the caution abolished and the right to silence limited."

The report then went on to discuss how in various areas of Civil Liberties, rights had been eroded during the year.

CONSPIRACY

Conspiracy laws are being used more and more frequently in political and quasi-political trials. The most notable of which were the attack on "underground papers, OZ, and, IT, the attack on Republican sympathisers, De Faoit and others (See Gutter Press last issue), Noel Jenkinson, and the attacks on demonstrators, in particular Peter Hain.

"Another abuse of conspiracy law is when it is used as a "roll-up" charge, that is, charging a defendant of agreeing to do something rather than actually doing it. This enables the prosecution to give a semblance of unity to a prosecution by combining a number of charges against several defendants into

a single but protracted trials. One advantage to the prosecution is that smaller fish can be bought into the net as in the first Angry Brigade Trial, that of Prescott and Purdie, when Purdie was acquitted, and the second, when four defendants were acquitted." "Another advantage to the prosecution is that the rules applying to hearsay evidence are relaxed, so that any action or statement by one conspirator is admissible as evidence against all the conspirators."

NORTHERN IRELAND

"What happens when a repressive and insensitive administration pushes things too far can still be seen too close. The Special Powers act there indicates how quickly and completely the rights of individuals can be removed by statute."



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Judges rules state that every effort must be made by the Police to contact parents before interviewing children. This is the exception rather than the rule. Police do all they can to avoid bring the parents in, they know they can get kids to do or say virtually what they like in order to get anyway. Young kids are frequently convicted on statements given in this way. The NCCL reports several cases where children have been kept in a police station for several hours without their parents being notified. Eight hours is not unusual.

MENTAL HEALTH

"In 1961 Mr. H. pleaded guilty to indecent exposure. He was not legally represented and was not shown the psychiatrists report on him. This was his first conviction. He is still locked up nearly twelve years after his conviction. "The Mental Health Act 1959 permits the arrest, detention and forcible administration of drugs and physical treatment, Treatment can also mean the use of Psycho-Surgery (eg. Labsectomy). In an article in the last Gutter Press it was told how a Dr. Ralph McGuire had appealed for the use of electric shock treatment for criminals. He stated that experiments he had carried out on sex-criminals had been successful. On Jan 24th a case in Cardiff revealed that a Sex offender had been given a chemical that castrated him. In the "OX" Trial, and in the recent Tony Soares case, "mental reports" were ordered by the courts. This is now becoming standard procedure in "awkward" trials. In Russia, dissidents are frequently declared insane, and we all know what happens to them when they're locked away.

THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS

"the Governor has total discretion over which books and newspapers can be received.

ground press but has allowed the National Front newspaper."

JURIES

There were many cries for restrictions of trials by juries in 72, the main body this was the Criminal Law Revision Committee, backed by Sir Robert Mark, Met. Police Comm. The main arguments used were that either juries were being hoodwinked by clever criminals, or that they were just too soft. The NCCL stated that most people chose trial by jury because so many judges accepted prosecution evidence uncritically. There was no evidence to back up the anti-jury brigade's campaign, indeed most of the attacks on juries came before the first piece of organised research was done on the subject. "The Jury at Work" by the Oxford University Penal Research Unit, the unit contradicted almost all the statements of the anti-jurists. "The introduction of the majority verdicts in 1967 may be seen as only the first of a long series of assaults on jury trials. The NCCL will continue to counter-attack."

RIGHT TO PROTEST

"This case will prove that there is no right to demonstrate in English law." These were the opening words of the prosecution in the trial of Peter Hain at Bow Street in Oct '71. As the NCCL chairman wrote to the Times. "We are in danger of seeing the right to public protest clarified out of existence." "With those responsible for organising political campaigns exposed to the risks of "catch-all" conspiracy charges."

THE POLICE

Police were issued with arms, 2237 times, (inc. 1717 in the Met. Area).

"The past twelve months have seen the development and expansion of one of the most important changes in police theory policy and tactics in recent years. The change was

that officers and constables should relate with the community within which they work, and a well established chain of command, again based on the community."

In London, the Special Patrol Group has over 200 members, with a transport pool, communications and command structure entirely independent of the communities in which they may work.

"In the Thames Valley report it was announced that 500 officers (19.8% of the force) were to be trained in the use of firearms, and in the rest of the reports (from Chief Constables) approx. 10% of each force had received or were in the process of receiving weapons training for pistols shotguns, or CS gas."

"All the weapons they (Chief Constables) are reported to be actively considering would have a far greater penetration and hitting power."

THE NCCL

All views and comments outside of brackets in this article are entirely my own and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the NCCL. I urge everyone who reads this article to get hold of this report and use it. The NCCL despite their limitations have amassed a huge armoury of injustice under this system, and are still doing so. But the important thing is what we do with this information, do we join the NCCL and campaign with petitions, letters to parliament, and general pressure politics, to try to reform this system. No, the days of reform are finished. The NCCL as a vehicle of communication and education on civil rights, does a fair job. But as a vehicle of change it doesn't even get off the ground. There is only one way to defend democratic rights and that is by the mass mobilisation of the working class. Something the NCCL stands well clear of. There is not one word in this report of the economic crisis affecting capitalism, or indeed of the necessity of repression and ever increasing repression under the power of capital. The NCCL falls roughly into the same category as the Citizens Rights Office who think you can defeat the legislation of this government by appealing to their conscience and by employing legal gymnastics. The fight for democratic rights is a political fight. These groups for all their protests are upholders of this system and will do anything to avoid questioning the basic premise on which it rests. The right to private property, on which all laws in this country are based on. The report can be obtained from NCCL, 186, Kings Cross Road, or Rising Free.

THE FIGHT FOR EDITH CAVELL

5

Last summer, ILEA published a 'Green Paper' on the future of all secondary schools in Hackney and Tower Hamlets - the first of four such documents covering all of Inner London. The Green Paper contained plans for the schools up until 1980, and the plans had two aims - firstly to bring all schools within the comprehensive system, secondly to close six schools as the population falls.

The first aim was overwhelmingly welcomed by most schools, even the grammar schools involved. But the second aim became the basis of a bitter campaign. There can be little doubt that London's population is falling, but people objected to ILEA's proposals to close down six schools for several reasons.

Objections

Firstly, if all the schools stayed open, the population fall would lead to smaller classes, with classes in secondary schools falling from their present average of 31 pupils to 25.

Secondly, if schools are closed, the sites and accommodation are lost. Yet there is at present a government ban on any secondary school rebuilding. We would therefore be deprived of accommodation without the chance of replacing it, even though most schools are overcrowded and forced to restrict their educational provision simply through lack of space.

The third argument against ILEA's proposals was that they hit especially hard at particular areas. For example, their one planned closure in Hackney, that

of Edith Cavell School, would leave a huge area without any school whatsoever. Of the five closures proposed for Tower Hamlets, that of Robert Montefiore would also deprive a community of its only school.

Other issues were also involved: the fact that the proposals favoured the voluntary schools at the expense of the county schools; and the fact that there was no projected increase in the proportion of pupils at mixed schools. But we decided to concentrate our opposition to school closures, and formed a Hackney Schools Campaign uniting Hackney N.U.T. with some P.T.A.s and campaigned actively for three months.

Campaign

ILEA published its 'Green Paper' proposals as a basis for public discussion before they made their decisions in December. We decided to make this public discussion a reality and therefore held two big public meetings and fifteen school meetings (often with 70, 80, even 100 parents attending.) We enlisted the support of Hackney Trades Council, trade union branches, tenants associations, the London Co-op Society, and parents associations urging them all to send resolutions to ILEA. We flooded the local press with articles, published our own Anti-Green Paper called 'Improving their Chances', printed 20,000 leaflets, organised a petition, and arranged several deputations to County Hall.

Victory

The weight of public feeling was so great, especially in wide

sections of the Labour movement, that in the end we achieved nearly total success. When ILEA made its decisions on December 19th, they decided not to close Edith Cavell, and to go ahead with only one of the five closures in Tower Hamlets. We have won the prospect of smaller classes and more space per pupil as the population falls.

It is worth stressing that the campaign was not fought out of sentimental loyalty to any particular school; it had broader aims than merely saving existing schools. It aimed at a radical improvement in educational standards in Hackney, and that is why it was able to unite so many people not directly involved with

the actual schools planned to be closed.

Now other areas in London are fighting similar battles, using the lessons we learnt in Hackney and claiming that their school closure proposals should be dropped just as ours were.

One thing we proved was that there is a lot more public concern over education in Hackney than ILEA realised. Therefore Hackney Schools Campaign has decided to remain in existence as a permanent pressure group for progressive educational advance, and we welcome the affiliation of any group or individual. Write to us at 1 Bushberry Road, E.9.

Hackney School Students

In May 1972 there was, what was probably the first demonstration ever to be held by school students. This was organised by the School Action Union and resulted in masses of schoolkids marching down to the rallying point at Trafalgar Square. Unfortunately this demonstration was not much of a success due mainly to the fact that it was not properly organised, and also, that it was disrupted by the police. To add to all that, all press coverage of the event was biased and made a farce of the whole event. Although it wasn't very successful, it aroused a lot of thought among school students. It was in fact the start of a school movement in Hackney, which is aimed at uniting school students in a fight for democracy in schools, democratic school councils, more involved parent-teacher associations and the improvement of schools and educational facilities.

In the beginning of the 1972 school year there was an uproar at Cardinal Pole School, Homerton, over the distribution of a radical pupil magazine called VISION. This magazine was produced and distributed by pupils within the school and it resulted in four pupils getting suspended from the school. This magazine marked the beginning of this serious school movement which now involves a large number of students from various schools in Hackney. The students are also involved with the Hackney Schools Campaign and the National Union of School Students.

Anybody interested in the movement can contact VISION c/o H.P.P.



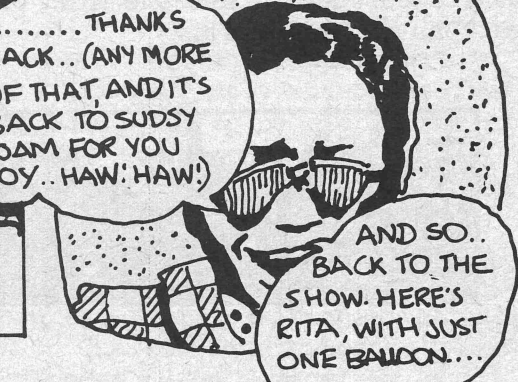
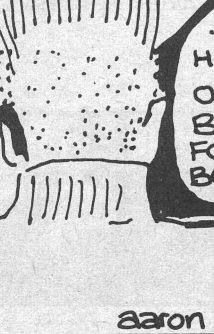
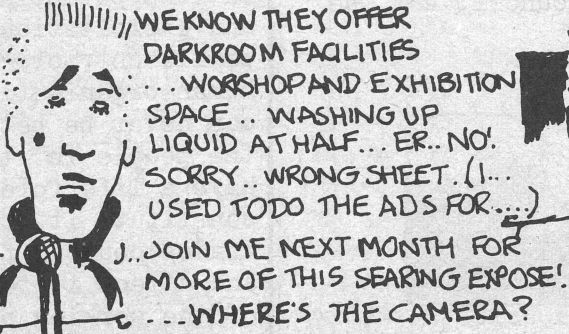
AND HERE AT No.38...
..UM..... THESE ARE THE
OFFICES OF..... ER... FREEFORM!!



PRETTY SHIFTY..UH.. BUNCH
HUH? (WAS THAT A RABBIT?)
WELL... SOME WEEKS AGO
THEY HAD AN EXHIBITION OF
WORK ... AND ... AND.. ER..
OUR CAMERAS!! WE HAD OUR
HIDDEN CAMERAS ON HAND
... ER, IN HAND .. TO RECORD
THE HAPPENING



EH?... OH.. IT SEEMS MY HAND WAS IN THE ER... WELL... ANYWAY, WHO ARE FREEFORM? WHAT DO THEY.. ER....



6 HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL - A REPLY

Dear Editorial Board, Hackney People's Press

In your issue of May 1st you invited the Trades Council to reply to the allegations and remarks made by Mr. C. Swift in his report on the public meeting held by the Hackney Trades Council at Stamford Hill Library on March 27th on the Wage Freeze. As secretary of the Trades Council I suppose I am in a position to reply. I will first point out inaccuracies in Mr. Swift's report, and finally conclude with more general observations.

INACCURACIES.

1. The first correction is a slight one. It is stated that the CPSA speaker (civil servant) said that "he was not, on any account going to criticize his union leadership or that of the TUC as a whole". Arthur Green did not refer to the TUC. Furthermore, he said that at this particular public meeting he would not criticize his own union leadership, as being not the place in his opinion. In his speech he outlined alternative industrial action to that decided upon by his union leadership.

2. After this criticism of the CPSA speaker and remarking that Pat Fitton NUT made a good speech on the struggle of teachers, Mr. Swift continues: "But the only speaker with an thing really concrete to offer was Alec Porter, ancillary worker from St. Leonard's Hospital". It depends very much on what is understood by the word "concrete". The absolute totality of what Mr. Porter said was to call for a General Strike and the re-election of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies (as Mr. Swift correctly reports). Mr. Porter did not say one word about the struggle of hospital ancillary workers, describe their conditions of work or pay. His "speech" took two minutes. It was the easiest speech this writer had ever heard. Mr. Porter need really not have come. He need only have sent a cutting from the "Workers Press", the newspaper of the Socialist Labour League (SLL). This writer totally agrees that we need a General Strike to oust the Tory government. He does not believe, however, that a General Strike will put into office a Labour Government pledged to Socialist principles. This war-cry of the SLL is the biggest load of tripe imaginable, and utter political naivety. In the opinion of this writer it would have been more "concrete" of Mr. Porter if he had given us details of how ready his own union members are for a General Strike and how exactly it is to be brought about.



MAY DAY FESTIVITIES ?

3. Mr. Swift reports that a supporter of the Communist Party got up to say that anyone who criticized May Day in any way was an extreme left winger. Lew Smith is not a supporter of the Communist Party, nor a member. Furthermore he got up not to slam extreme left wingers, but to criticize the chairman of the meeting (whom Mr. Swift in his previous paragraph described as a 'Communist Party member') for knocking May Day and underestimating its importance. Lew Smith's point was that if we cannot organise effectively for a one day (May Day) strike, how can we possibly speak seriously of an all-out General Strike? Furthermore a successful strike on May Day could be the first concrete step in the direction of a much bigger and more effective action. This point of view seems rather logical and acceptable.

4. Mr. Swift goes on to describe the SLL members as criticizing the Trades Council's attitude to May Day as "the be-all and end-all of workers' protest against the Government". I cannot recall whether during the meeting the SLL made this criticism, but whether they did or not, it is a total misrepresentation of the mind of the Trades Council. The mind of the Trades Council was more closely expressed by Lew Smith, one of its E.C. members, as described above. The Trades Council at its meeting two days after May Day passed a resolution for the coming Annual Conference of Trades Councils (May 9th-20th) calling upon the TUC not to betray the militant spirit of May Day by entering into talks with the Government, but instead to start organising the unions immediately for mass effective action against the Government. The resolutions of the Trades Council are the mind of the Trades Council, not the allegations of Mr. Swift.



LEFT WING VETO ?

5. Mr. Swift next describes how I, as secretary of the Trades Council, when pressed by SLL members, invited them to the next meeting of the May Day Committee, and that later I wrote to one of them to withdraw the invitation. A correct version of what happened is this. Outside the library they asked me why the Trades Council had participated in the SLL North London Council of Action. I replied that the Trades Council had never been invited to take part, and that furthermore most members of the Trades Council had never as much as heard of it. After all, not everyone reads the "Workers Press", and this Council of Action can hardly be said to be hitting the headlines every day with its campaigns and demonstrations. I asked them to send us a letter of invitation. It has not yet arrived. Then they asked me if they could join the May Day Committee. I said they could. I later wrote to one of them, not to withdraw the invitation, but to request that they await the decision of the E.C. It had been brought to my notice that rule governing all Trades Councils is that they cannot cooperate with the Communist Party or its subsidiaries. This latter rule covers the SLL! At its next meeting the E.C. confirmed that until such time as the rule is changed, the Trades Council is obliged to keep it. However the E.C. affirmed that all trade unionists may work on the May Day Committee and its Action Committee, either in their individual capacity or as a delegate from their branch or place of work, and this holds for any and all SLL members who are trade unionists. In a word in that capacity they are welcome, and I immediately wrote to tell them so. That is the truth of the matter, nothing else.



COUNCIL OF ACTION

6. In his final paragraph Mr. Swift expresses the view that unless the Trades Council sees itself as capable of transformation into a body such as the Council of Action etc., and not be tied to the apron strings of the TUC or the domination of the Communist Party it will be as dead as a dinosaur. A Trades Council member would smile at the idea of the Hackney Trades Council being thought of as tied to the TUC's apron strings. Therein lies a tale but not the one Mr. Swift has dreamt up. 23 years ago the TUC deregistered the Hackney Trades Council, it was later registered again, and like all active Trades Councils exists officially in virtue of its registration by the TU but hardly as its local rubber stamp. Far from it. Furthermore, the Hackney Trades Council is not dominated by the Communist Party. This is a sheer matter of counting heads, and the calculation is not on Mr. Swift's side.

7. Finally, Mr. Swift says he is qualified to speak as above about the Trades Council because he was, as he asserts, at one time a member of the Trades Council. This is true, but only true enough to be very misleading. Mr. Swift was a member just long enough to attend one general meeting and one executive committee meeting, that is, just one month. Perhaps the experience was enough to make it feel a lifetime.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

It is all too easy for a person like Mr. Swift to appear at a Trades Council meeting for a brief moment, sniff the air like a rabbit and finding he does not like it, bolt back into his burrow, to write about the experience. It is much more difficult to recognise the potential and value of an organisation, and work steadily to make it into an effective instrument in the struggle for justice for the working people. The Hackney Trades Council, like any trades council, is a council made up of delegates of each of the union branches in the area. It is there to promote the interests of the workers and their families in the branches affiliated to it, to secure joint action between them on issues affecting all of them, and to work for total economic and social improvement of the lives of working people. This is its charter. Now anybody, who has even a grain of political insight, should be able to recognise the potential locally of such an organisation. In the opinion of this writer trade unions have the potential to be the organisations most democratically representative of the working people, and furthermore the most powerful organisations, potentially, in the struggle against all forms of capitalism and exploitation. A trades council has the potential to be a local parliament, more representative of the working people than any other human organisation, can only reflect the views of the people in it, can never be better than the people in it, and can only achieve what the people in it are capable of and actually try to do. It does not have a life force or a power greater than the sum of the people who constitute it. It is up to militant trade unionists, recognising a trades council for what it potentially is, to come to it as delegates and direct it to the activity which they believe is in the interest of the working people.

information

Hackney Claimants Union

For help in all matters concerning social security. Meetings: 12.30 Wed. Office 2-5 Tues & Thu. at Centerprise 254-1620.

Homerton Claimants Union

5 Templemead House, Kingsmead Estate Centre, Homerton Rd, E9. 985-3987 Meetings Monday 7.30-10pm. Office Mon & Fri 10.30-12am.



Legal Aid and Advice If you need it just ask

Free aid and advice on housing, legal and social security matters. Thursday evenings 6. Thurs. even. between 6.30-7.30 at Centerprise.

'Servant of the People' M.P's

Your one can be found, or so we're told, at the following addresses and times:

Stoke-Newington and Hackney North.

David Weitzman, 40 Stamford Hill N16. 806-3718. Friday 7.15-8.15. Sunday (Alt.) 11.30-12.30 Hackney Central.

S. Clinton Davis, 14a Graham Rd, E8. 254-3285. Friday 7.30-8.15.

Bethnal Green (part).

W.S. Hilton, 349 Cambridge Heath Rd, E2. 739-7768.

Shoreditch & Finsbury (part)

R. Brown, 108 Shephardess Walk, N1 253-1556.

Committee Against Racism

The committee is a delegate body to which individual members can affiliate. Now more than three years old, the monthly meetings are held at 7.45pm on the first Wednesday of every month at Community Relations Office, Mare St.

Committee for a Better Environment

Meets in the lounge of Queen Mary Hostel, by Hoxton Hall, 128 Hoxton St. at 7.45pm on the third Wed. of every month.

Y.C.N.D.

Would anyone interested in forming a Hackney Y.C.N.D. group please contact: Clare Smith, 108 Dalston Lane, E8. 254-1926.

Homeless Action Campaign

Any groups or individuals who are interested in getting together to fight the homelessness and bad housing conditions in Hackney and nationally please contact the above address or ring 986-3123 x6433 and ask for Leighton Evans. It is hoped to call a meeting in the near future with a view to starting a local HAC group.

St. Matthias Playgroup

The St. Matthias playgroup Wordsworth Rd. N.16. will be opening in September on three afternoons in addition to the existing morning sessions. Anyone that is interested in a place for their child please call in at the hall one morning and see Liz or Maggie for more details.

URGENT - DRIVER WANTED

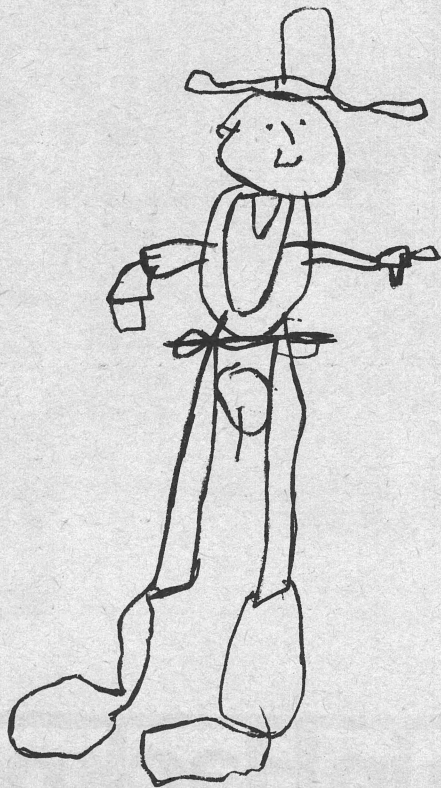
Have you got a heavy goods licence? Do you know anyone who has? Hackney Playbus has to be moved every morning Mon-Fri at 9.45 from the garage to Kingsmead Estate. At lunchtime it has to be moved to De Beauvoir and then back to the garage at 3.30pm. £2 per day or £1 per session. Temp or Perm. Please contact: Fran Crowther at 254-1620

After Six

6 Tyssen Road. N.16. 249-2847 Information Service for the Homeless. They try to help

Hackney Under Fives

Have a open meeting at Centerprise on June 7th, 7.30. Anyone interested welcome. They will have a marquee at the Hackney Show in Clissold Park on June 16th. Bring the children.



Summer Holiday Playscheme

Summer holiday playschemes. During the summer Centerprise will be involved in a variety of playschemes. The two main projects will be one which will run from Centerprise and one on the Nisbet House Estate which is a Hackney Borough Council Estate.

The Centerprise project will consist of a five week camp in the country, a five week adventure playground and an environmental study group which will be made up of secondary children under qualified guidance, who will explore and report on some of the neglected areas of Hackney eg. canals, railways etc.

The Nisbet scheme will consist of a five week camping project and a five week adventure playground. **FOR THESE PROJECTS WE NEED**

An overall co-ordinator. We need someone to co-ordinate three or four summer holiday schemes in which we are involved, the two above being the main projects. This person would be employed for an eleven week period starting on 1st July. Pay: £17.50 per week. Camp site leaders. We need two leaders to run 2 five week camps involving 15 kids at a time. Pay: £17.50 per week.

Site Leaders. We need two to organise the two playgrounds on open sites in Hackney. Pay: £17.50 per week.

Assistant Leaders. We need assistant leaders for both the camp sites and the playgrounds. They would not necessarily have to work a full five weeks. Pay: £10 per week.

Volunteers. We need many volunteers. They will be paid between £3.00 and £10 per week or would be able to get meal vouchers from us and travelling expenses while working in the site, and getting to it.

If you are interested in any of these activities or helping out in any way please contact either Anthony Kendall or Frank Ousby

Half Moon Theatre & Gallery

27 Alie St. E.1. 247-1492 From 5th June: 'The Iceberg Hotel' by Andy Smith. All seats 50p.

Gallery: Photographs by Trisha Widdison and photographs of Bedford St. Liverpool 8. Admission free.

Theatre Royal Stratford

Salway Rd. E.15 534-0310 To 16th June: 'Sweeney Todd' Sunday 17th June for one day: 'British Rubbish Goes East' 7.30 pm, all seats £1. From 20th June: 'Nuts in June' 8 pm. Prices: £1.50, £1 and 60p.

Unity Theatre

1 Goldington St, NW1. 387-8647 June 15th: 'Tom Barker' the story of one of the founder members of the 'Wobblies' (industrial workers of the world). Subsequent performances Fri, Sat, Sun at 7.45pm.

Bethnal Green Museum

Cambridge Heath Rd. E2 980-2415. Posters of a lifetime from the archives of S.H. Benson Ltd. (1893-1971) Mon-Sat 10-6pm. Sun 2.30-6pm. Ends July 29th.

Whitechapel Gallery

Whitechapel High St. E1. 247-1492. May 30th-June 24th: Mark Vaux, Tess Jaray paintings. Ed Meneeley sculptures. Tues-Sun 11am-6pm.

HELP

Need indulgent landlord for registered drug addict. Crash pad share normal facilities, v. cheap. Apply c/o People's Press.

East Information

103/105 Market St, E6. 471-2276. Gingerbread, Squatters, GLF, newspaper projects, information.

Release

1 Elgin Ave. W9. 289-1123, emerg: 603-8654. Help with drug problems and legal advice. 666

Hackney Workers Educational Association

People's Autobiography of Hackney A project using tape recorders and cameras to collect people's recollections of life in our area earlier in this century. Course Meetings: 6, 20 June. at 8pm Centerprise.

Silkscreen Workshop

The workshop is now open and ready to be used by local groups and people who want to print posters, cards, T-shirts and all sorts of other things. Silkscreen printing is a versatile technique and you can print on anything, wood, plastic or fabric etc. The workshop is well equipped with two vacuum base tables and one non-vacuum base table, a light box, lots of frames, squeegees, paper etc. There is also an expert printer on hand for advice and help. The facilities are provided free so the only expense is for the materials used. It is open to teach and work with people: Wed. 10am-1.30pm, 6pm-8pm. Thur. 2pm-6pm. For more information anyone interested should come to the workshop at 81 Lenthall Rd, E8. Or contact Harriet at Centerprise.

Rising Free

Kings Cross Rd. WC1. 837-0182. Rising Free an information service which took over from the recently closed Agitprop. The group hopes to act as a source of information and ideas to 'counteract the propaganda of the straight press and media'. The group has also set up a library which includes a wide collection of papers and pamphlets gathered together by Agitprop.

RAP

Radical Alternatives to Prison. 104 Newgate St. EC1. 600-4793. June general meeting: John Harding-senior probation officer responsible for community service in Nottingham. Will speak on; Community Service in Operation-the Nottingham Experience'. Sun. 17th June. New Horizons, 1 Macklin St. WC1.

Music

A new musical experience will be on FREE at Centerprise Wednesday 20 June at 8pm.

People's News Service

149 Clapham Rd. SW9. 735-2088. Publishes a weekly bulletin of news ignored in the 'straight' press. Subs: £1 for 10 issues.

Claimants - Know Your Rights

THESE ARE THE GRANTS YOU CAN GET - we can't live on the basic allowance:

Clothing, shoes, linen, blankets, mattresses, beds, furniture, medical and dental expenses, prescriptions, milk tokens and vitamins books for children under 5, removal expenses, carpetting, flooring, curtains, heating equipment, fuel bills, cots, prams, for OAP's who are housebound a radio and, if sick, a phone as well cutlery, crockery, fares to hospitals, to prisons, to children's homes etc., electric iron, glasses.

***** If any of the above is refused you have the automatic right of APPEAL. They don't tell us about appeals because it's more work for them.

***** You don't have to speak to them by yourself, whether at reception or in the interview room. You can take a friend or a member of the claimants union. NEVER MEET THEM ALONE: IT'S DANGEROUS.

***** Don't be fobbed off at reception. They have to accept your claim. Stay in the office until they deal with your claim.

Centerprise

Books on sale at Centerprise Bookshop. Carlos Castaneda: Journey to Ixtlan. £2.25. Bodley Head. Chris Searle: The New Season 85p. Calder & Boyars. Shah: Caravan of Dreams 40p. Quartet. Mackay Brown: An Orkney Tapestry 50p. Quartet. Joe Hyams: Bogie (introduction by Lauren Bacall) 40p. Mayflower The Penguin John Lennon 60p. John Lennon Remembers 40p. Penguin. Hackney Half-term Adventure. 20p. Centerprise. If it wasn't for the Houses Inbetween. (Pack of documents about Hackney) 60p. Illich: Deschooling Society 35p. Penguin. Penguin Guide to Supplementary Benefits 40p.



Street Theatre in Hackney

The Tramp is dirty and parasitic if he actually touches you. If he stays on the other side of the street he is a colourful enigma, someone to stare at, an object of art celebrated in countless films and paintings. Well, we haven't quite reached the stage where the Arts Council gives grants to the most interesting tramp on the A1, but Hackney Festival Council did actually subsidize those three scruffs that you might have seen around Hackney last week.

The Tramp/Clown figure seemed to be a good motif for street theatre for several reasons. For a start the tramp is not an extravagantly show biz figure that people on the street are going to automatically recoil from. Secondly, the tramp is an obvious metaphor for the drop-out. And lastly when a street event had finished, it was convenient to be able to revert to our characters as tramps and move along with our cartload of junk.

In fact what happened was that we became increasingly involved in our characters as tramps and were taken for real tramps by many people, both adults and children. With the children this provided a good opportunity for discussions on life in the city without money, the value of work and material luxuries, and so on. On the other hand, it created a lot of problems insofar as we were obviously deceiving a lot of kids.

We found that events often began by the kids approaching us rather than the other way round. This was one of the main reasons

for structuring the act the way we did - it at least gave more possibility for the kids to initiate a play than in the more highly organized kids theatre as was shown one Saturday in Victoria Park, where the children took control from the start and made their own circus with us as helpers.

If things didn't happen in that automatic fashion, we had some songs, juggling and acrobatics from Emile Wolk and short mime pieces to attract crowds. Sometimes on the estates such as Haggerston, we would then perform a play about Angelo the tight-rope walker, trying to involve the children by giving them parts and making them up. A big problem with such a loosely structured show was that it never really ended and we often wondered how, if ever, we were going to get away from the children who pursued us up the street.

It was not only to children that we performed. Apart from the occasional hostility we had a good response from shoppers in Kingsland High Street and around Hackney Downs. Many of the older folk especially seemed to like it, saying that it took them back to the old days when there were more things happening on the streets with barrel organs and the like. We also appeared in launderettes and petrol stations and we even got some applause from a police station in Upper Clapton Road.

